

PCT

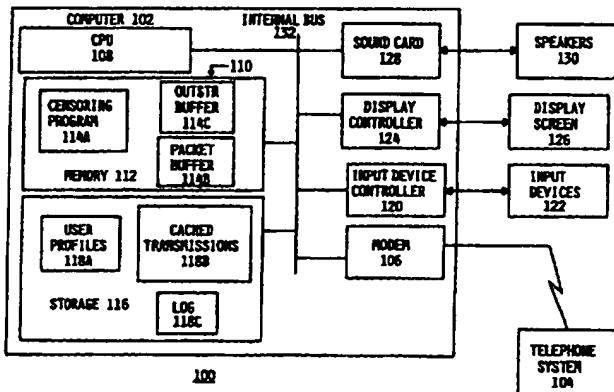
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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ :	A1	(11) International Publication Number:	WO 97/40446
G06F 11/30		(43) International Publication Date:	30 October 1997 (30.10.97)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US97/05379		(81) Designated States: CA, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).	
(22) International Filing Date: 1 April 1997 (01.04.97)		Published <i>With international search report.</i>	
(30) Priority Data: 08/634,949 19 April 1996 (19.04.96) US			
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(54) Title: CENSORING BROWSER METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR INTERNET VIEWING



(57) Abstract

A censoring browser method and apparatus are provided for Internet viewing. A user profile (118A) including user selected censoring parameters (700) is stored. Data packet contents are received and compared with the user selected censoring parameters (700). Responsive to the comparison, the received data packet contents are processed and selectively displayed responsive to the user selected censoring parameters (700). The user selected censoring parameters (700) includes user selected censored words and word fragments (702), and user selected categories (706). Compared word and word fragments matching user selected censored words and word fragments (702) can be removed and selectively replaced with predefined characters or acceptable substitute words (712). Tallies of weights for user selected categories are accumulated (614) and compared with used selected threshold values (612). A predefined message can be displayed (318) responsive to an accumulated tally exceeding a user selected threshold value (316) without displaying the received data packet contents.

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DescriptionCENSORING BROWSER METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR INTERNET VIEWINGField of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to a censoring browser method and apparatus for internet viewing.

Background of the Invention

10 The internet, an international, wide area network connects thousands of disparate packet-switching networks in industry, education, government, and research. The internet provides a medium for effectively communicating with others and a research support and information retrieval mechanism. The internet is used by people with diverse backgrounds and personalities. Exchange of information is quickly and conveniently provided. However, when searching on topics of interest, located information may contain objectionable and offensive material. Even business areas contain language which is offensive or indecent. Many internet users and parents would like to screen the content of information they regard as offensive.

20 Effective governmental control or legislation to outlaw indecent online content in the global internet environment may be difficult or impossible to implement. A coding system has been proposed by the World Wide Web Consortium to allow parents and other computer users to block content. In this coding system, organizations or interest groups will supply ratings for labeling internet sites. Parents or schools will use browsing software having the ability to recognize rating labels to filter out or block selected sites based on a selected rating system or other criteria, such as age and content. Access could be allowed to sites known to have approved content, and sites where inappropriate content is blocked.

30 There are several problems with such coding systems and approval lists. Firstly, they depend on other individuals to make the judgment on what is acceptable to the viewer.

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25 There are several problems with such coding systems and approval lists. Firstly, they depend on other individuals to make the judgment on what is acceptable to the viewer.

Social norms vary widely from community to community. Personal tastes and standards vary widely from person to person. What society at large may deem acceptable language, an individual may still find offensive. Secondly, address approval systems must continually be updated with current information. Multiple new sites are being added to the internet daily. A list cannot keep up with all of the changes, or even most of the changes occurring on the internet. To avoid being "black-listed" and traced, some sites are setting up addresses which change on periodic basis. No list of addresses can stay current when addresses are purposely changed. Thirdly, a listing system assumes vast resources because it assumes there is sufficient space to keep a comprehensive list of approved or disapproved sites. The rate of growth of the internet makes such a list unwieldy. Fourthly, a coding system assumes voluntary or legislated compliance by the site owners to be accepted. The internet has clearly demonstrated that there are many individuals who revel in the lack of control and seek to continue to have full freedom to do as they wish. Fifth, address lists and coding schemes depend on blocking content by address, that is by blocking a place so that information is not retrieved or displayed from that site. This means that all information from that site will be blocked. Yet, some sites with valid content have potentially objectionable language. By blocking the site, one misses the valuable content when the real problem is only one portion of the content. Further, unsolicited electronic mail may come from any address, and the originating address can be disguised. In short, it is generally impossible to always gauge content based on site.

A need exists for a censoring browser method and apparatus for internet viewing that efficiently and effectively facilitates user control to selectively censor information to be reviewed. It is desirable to provide such censoring browser method and apparatus that allows user control to set individual censoring standards, that is effective for even the newest sites, and that will work even when the number of sites on the internet grows by orders of

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magnitude. It is desirable to provide such censoring browser method and apparatus that is not dependent on voluntary or legislated compliance by the site owners, and that is content based as opposed to address based.

5 Summary of the Invention

In brief, a censoring browser method and apparatus are provided for internet viewing. A user profile including user selected censoring parameters is stored. Data packet contents are received and compared with the user selected 10 censoring parameters. Responsive to the comparison, the received data packet contents are processed and selectively displayed responsive to the user selected censoring parameters.

In accordance with features of the invention, the user 15 selected censoring parameters includes user selected censored words and word fragments, user selected categories, and user selected super categories. Compared word and word fragments matching user selected censored words and word fragments can be removed and selectively replaced with 20 predefined characters or acceptable substitute words. Tallies of weights for user selected categories are accumulated and compared with user selected threshold values. A predefined message can be displayed responsive to an accumulated tally exceeding a user selected threshold 25 value without displaying the received data packet contents. Transmissions with high tallies can be logged and reviewed at a later time for purposes of audit or refining the words, categories and other selected profile values.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The present invention together with the above and other 30 objects and advantages may best be understood from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention illustrated in the drawings, wherein:

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Brief Description of the Drawings

The present invention together with the above and other 30 objects and advantages may best be understood from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention illustrated in the drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram representation illustrating a computer system for implementing a censoring browser method and apparatus for internet viewing in accordance with the invention;

5 FIG. 2 is a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser main process for internet viewing of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser run online session process for internet viewing of the present invention;

10 FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser check contents, mark, and tally process for internet viewing of the present invention;

15 FIGS. 5A and 5B together provide a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser data packet processing and displaying method for internet viewing of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating a user profile record structure in accordance with the present invention;

20 FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating a user selected censored word list record structure in accordance with the present invention;

FIGS. 8A and 8B are charts respectively illustrating a category structure and a super category structure in accordance with the present invention;

25 FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser process to mark delimited word and add weights for internet viewing of the present invention;

FIGS. 10A, 10B, and 10C together provide a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser method for processing tallies for internet viewing of the present invention;

30 FIG. 11 is a flow chart illustrating a censoring browser process to log data in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating a computer program product in accordance with the invention; and

35 FIGS. 13, 14, 15 and 16 illustrate respective graphical user interface screens for inputting user selected censoring parameters included in a user profile in accordance with the invention.

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Description of the Preferred Embodiment

Having reference now to the drawings, in FIG. 1 there is shown a block diagram representation illustrating a computer system generally designated by 100 for performing a censoring browser method for internet viewing in accordance with the invention. Computer system 100 includes a computer 102 connected to a telephone system 104 via an internal modem 106. Computer 102 comprises a central processing unit (CPU) 108, program and data storage generally designated by 110. As illustrated, program and data storage 110 includes a memory 112 for storing a censoring browser program 114A, a packet buffer 114B, and an OUTSTR buffer 114C, and a storage 116 for storing user defined profiles 118A, cached transmissions 118B, and a log 118C. Computer 102 includes an input device controller 120 operatively coupled to input devices 122, a display controller 124 operatively coupled to a display screen 126 and a sound card 128 operatively coupled to speakers 130. An internal bus 132 facilitates communications among the components of computer 102.

Various commercially available computers can be used for computer 102 in the computer system 100, for example, an IBM personal computer. It should be understood that other alternative embodiments including local area network (LAN) arrangements are possible and fall within the spirit and scope of the invention.

In accordance with the present invention, a censoring browser method and apparatus for internet viewing are provided which, before any text is displayed, searches for and marks any words and words containing any word fragments on a user-defined unwanted-word list stored in a user profile. Then the marked censored words are removed and replaced by user selected substitutes for display of the processed text in accordance with user selected censoring rules stored in a user profile. Each user profile 118A includes a profile record 600 of FIG. 6, a plurality of censored word list records 700 of FIG. 7, a category

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structure 800 of FIG. 8A, and a super category structure 802 of FIG. 8B.

Referring now to FIG. 2, a censoring browser main process performed by CPU 108 for internet viewing in accordance with the present invention is illustrated. The sequential steps starting at a block 200 begin with a user function selection as indicated at a block 202 and end at a block 204 with a user exit selection. Responsive to a set profiles user selection, a user entered password is compared 5 with a master password as indicated at a decision block 206. When editing of the user profile is not allowed for the user entered password, then the sequential operations return to block 202 to receive a user function selection. If user profile editing is allowed for the user entered password, a new or existing profile is selected as indicated at a block 10 208. Then the selected user profile is edited responsive to user selections to add and/or delete word and word fragments, to add and/or delete categories, to add and/or delete super categories, to set weights, to set preferences, 15 to set actions and to set thresholds as indicated at a block 210. Then the sequential operations return to block 202 to receive a user function selection.

Responsive to a connect user selection, a user profile is selected and loaded as indicated at a block 212. A user password is checked as indicated at a decision block 214. 25 If the user password fails, then the sequential operations return to block 202 to receive a user function selection. Otherwise if the user password is accepted, then an accumulated threshold is checked as indicated at a decision block 216. If the accumulated threshold fails, then the sequential operations return to block 202 with the user function selection. Otherwise, if the accumulated threshold is acceptable, a run online session routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 3 is performed as indicated 30 by a block 218.

Referring now to FIG. 3, sequential steps performed by CPU 108 for a censoring browser online session for internet viewing of the present invention are shown. The sequential steps starting at a block 300 begin with a user function 35

structure 800 of FIG. 8A, and a super category structure 802 of FIG. 8B.

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Responsive to a connect user selection, a user profile 25 is selected and loaded as indicated at a block 212. A user password is checked as indicated at a decision block 214. If the user password fails, then the sequential operations return to block 202 to receive a user function selection. Otherwise if the user password is accepted, then an accumulated threshold is checked as indicated at a decision 30 block 216. If the accumulated threshold fails, then the sequential operations return to block 202 with the user function selection. Otherwise, if the accumulated threshold is acceptable, a run online session routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 3 is performed as indicated 35 by a block 218.

Referring now to FIG. 3, sequential steps performed by CPU 108 for a censoring browser online session for internet viewing of the present invention are shown. The sequential steps starting at a block 300 begin with a user function

selection as indicated at a decision block 302 and return as indicated at a block 304 with a user exit selection. Responsive to a user selection of either a select location or an input location, a internet data packet is requested as indicated at a block 306. The internet data packet transmission is received and transmission tally values are reset to initial values as indicated at a block 308. Next a routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 4, to check the contents of the data packet against a user selected censored word list, to mark censored words, and to tally weights is performed as indicated by a block 310. Then a process tallies routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 10 is performed as indicated at a block 311. Multiple predetermined tallies are accumulated that are used to differentiate between censoring actions based on the user profile, accumulated buildup, and weighted word values.

Next as indicated at a decision block 312, it is determined whether a log threshold is exceeded. If the log threshold is exceeded, then current information with transmission statistics is stored as indicated at a block 314 as illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 11. When the log threshold is not exceeded or after the information is logged at block 314, then an accumulated tally is compared with an accumulated threshold value as indicated at a decision block 316. If the accumulated threshold value is exceeded, then a message is displayed as indicated at a block 318 and the sequential operations return as indicated at a block 320 to function selection at block 202 in FIG. 2 without displaying the current data packet contents. When a user passes the particular accumulated threshold for that user, the user is done with the session until someone with a master password resets the accumulated tally. The user is effectively stopped from running another online session by the accumulated threshold checking at block 216. If the accumulated threshold is not exceeded, then a view threshold flag is checked as indicated at a decision block 322. If the view threshold is exceeded, then a message is displayed as indicated at a block 324 and

selection as indicated at a decision block 302 and return as indicated at a block 304 with a user exit selection. Responsive to a user selection of either a select location or an input location, a internet data packet is requested as indicated at a block 306. The internet data packet transmission is received and transmission tally values are reset to initial values as indicated at a block 308. Next a routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 4, to check the contents of the data packet against a user selected censored word list, to mark censored words, and to tally weights is performed as indicated by a block 310. Then a process tallies routine illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 10 is performed as indicated at a block 311. Multiple predetermined tallies are accumulated that are used to differentiate between censoring actions based on the user profile, accumulated buildup, and weighted word values.

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